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Legislation proposed to help local governments provide more efficient services

LANSING – Following a statewide series of hearings held across the state earlier this year, Sen. Laura M. Toy is spearheading a legislative package that gives local officials more flexibility in managing their resources.

“Everywhere we went we heard ways the Legislature could make things more efficient for local governments,” said Toy, R-Livonia. “The legislation we’re proposing is designed to remove cumbersome red tape and help streamline the operation of local governments. This package will help simplify the administrative processes and relieve some of the obstacles that local units of government face.”

The Government Flexibility package will give local governments more authority and control of services in their units of government.

“I applaud Senator Toy for her efforts on this issue,” said Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema, R-Wyoming. “She went across the state looking for input and is now acting upon what she heard. This legislation will help local governments do their jobs better while saving taxpayer dollars. This is good news for local officials and great news for the people in their communities.”

As chair of the Senate Committee on Local, Urban and State Affairs, Toy convened four hearings and heard testimony from more than 40 local officials.

“I’m glad to see what Senator Toy and her colleagues are doing in the Senate to help local governments,” said Livonia Mayor Jack Engebretson. “The city of Livonia, like other municipalities across the state, works for the residents it serves and anything the state Legislature can do to help us be more efficient and save on costs is greatly appreciated.”

One of the proposals in the 10-bill package is designed to remove the arduous and costly requirements for city tax roll printing when the information is available on a computer database, while another bill will promote pooled investment programs so local governments can combine investments with county funds to obtain a better possible rate of return.

Other legislation in the package will authorize the Michigan Department of Transportation to permit the use of trunkline rights of way in downtown areas for things such as sidewalk displays and cafes.

Another proposal will help ease safety concerns for surveyors surveying roadways by updating the state's 20-year-old property survey process to include Global Positioning System technology.

“Having served for a number of years in local government, I understand the struggles that local officials face,” Toy said. “We need to do everything in our power to help them do their jobs more efficiently so they can serve their residents to the best of their ability while providing taxpayers with savings.”

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